



CASE STUDY

RIGHT-SIZING THE COLLECTION
AND IMPROVING EFFICIENCIES
WITH COLLECTIONHQ AT MARY
RILEY STYLES PUBLIC LIBRARY



save**TIME**



save**MONEY**



improve**PERFORMANCE**



Mary Riley Styles Public Library is a single-branch library system in the city of Falls Church, Virginia. The library, which has been recognized as a Library Journal Star Library for the past 14 years, serves a population of 15,000 and welcomes around 28,000 cardholders including residents from the wider metropolitan area of Washington D.C.

The staff at MRSPL opened a newly renovated building in 2021 and have been using collectionHQ to manage their collection since 2022.

THE CHALLENGE

Preparation for the opening of MRSPL's newly renovated building prompted a large-scale weeding project to right-size the collection and ensure that the materials provided were up to date.

However, maintaining the collection to this standard with a small group of collection development staff who have various other responsibilities would be a challenge. Marshall Webster, Acting Library Director, shared, "As a single building library with decentralized selection, our selection staff wear multiple hats and have to juggle collection development with many other competing responsibilities."



“We wanted to continue to cultivate our collection to offer the best collection we could for the public that represented as many different people as possible.”

BILLETTE RIPPY
Library Supervisor

THE SOLUTION

Marshall and Billette identified collectionHQ as the solution that would help to regularize weeding processes, support more informed selection decisions, and improve the diversity of the library’s collection.

Marshall shared, “We looked at a couple of services but what we liked about collectionHQ was that it didn’t just provide a one-off snapshot in time like some of the other products. We wanted something that would allow us to continue analyzing the collection and give us some benchmarks that we could evaluate performance against over time. I was also intrigued to introduce a tool that would help us look at the collection more holistically. Even though we used the CREW standard, we needed more structure and consistency in our weeding processes.”

BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNITY NEEDS

The team’s first goal with collectionHQ was to get the existing collection into shape. Using the “Collection Check” tools, the staff has been able to efficiently audit the collection, improve accuracy of the catalog, and gain a better understanding of what materials are resonating with the community. Billette shared, “Starting with Collection Check helps to see the books you should be paying attention to and what is not being used consistently by the community.”

MORE EFFICIENT WORKFLOWS

Prior to the introduction of collectionHQ, data to inform weeding processes would be exported in spreadsheets from the library’s catalog. Unfortunately, these did not guide staff on what to do with the data, resulting in weeding practices that were labor intensive, infrequent, and subject to staff biases.

Thanks to collectionHQ’s easy to use action plans, weeding has become far more efficient. Marshall commented, “Even though we are still reviewing the books before they are pulled, it has certainly made weeding a faster process which allows our selectors to spend more time being thoughtful about the books they are adding to the collection and keeping the collection fresh.”

Maintaining regularity of collection management practices has also been improved with collectionHQ’s Schedule Management tool. Now, Billette can plan monthly weeding and auditing activities by collection and assign tasks fairly among staff who receive reminders when these tasks are due. Billette added that the schedule has, “Helped tech services because it is pacing the weeding, so they can more easily manage what books are coming into their office.”



This smooth roll out of collectionHQ has been supported by the tool's Help resources which Billette describes as, "The most helpful I have ever used. If I am unsure what I am looking at I just click on the question mark, and I don't have to search somewhere else to find out. It helps staff get to know the reports easily and quickly."

IMPROVED COLLECTION PERFORMANCE

After just twelve months of more regular weeding and collection management activities supported by collectionHQ, the staff at MRSPL has been able to reduce the quantity of the collection that is "dead" (or not circulating) by 10 percent.



"The collection is tighter, books are in better condition, there are fewer missing items in our catalog, and we are providing a better service for our customers."

MARSHALL WEBSTER
Acting Library Director

SUPPORTING BUDGETS AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

Delighted with the results achieved in the first year of using collectionHQ, Marshall looks forward to digging deeper into the tool in year two to support budgeting and strategic planning.

He shared: "Before, selection was based on a gut feeling and feedback from selectors rather than evidence-based analysis. As part of our new strategic plan, one of our values is to be more data-driven and ensure that our decision-making process is rational and provides a good return on investment. We serve a diverse, well-educated, engaged community, so we get lots of requests, but at same time we'd like to be more market driven, so collectionHQ is going to help us to get the right balance."

Another priority at the library is to offer a collection that is inclusive of everyone in the local community and of the wider world. Billette shared, "With collectionHQ, we can see that our Young Adult collection is more representative of diverse communities than our Adult collection, so we will use the DEI Analysis tool to identify and address these parts of the collection that are underrepresented."



KEY BENEFITS

*Increase efficiency of
library staff*

.....

*Improve weeding and
catalog accuracy*

.....

*Representation
through DEI Analysis*

